

PlantFinder@ Whittier Narrows Natural Area

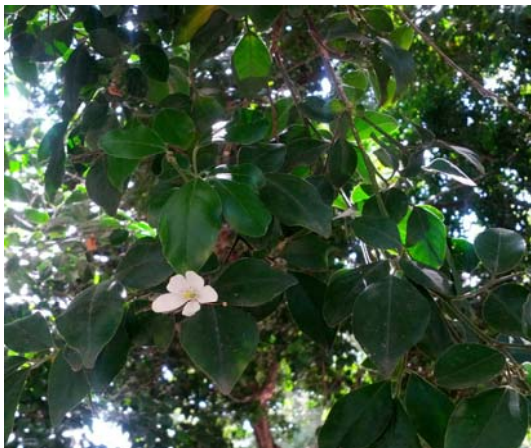


Explore Whittier Narrows plant diversity with this new program. Developed by and for plant lovers, this plant compendium can be used for **locating** interesting plants in and around the Whittier Narrows Natural Area (WNNa). There are 30 plant targets to be recorded in WNNa and each plant is identified by a green lettered stake. Correctly **record** all the plants on your compendium sheet and **return** to the Nature Center for self-scoring. Plants 1-15 are along Woody's Trail/Ethno-Botany Trail. Plants 16-30 are on the other trails shown below east of Woody's Trail.

Important: To protect existing habitat, all plants are located along established paths and/or trails. Please stay on the paths, and especially out of any designated temporary Southern California Edison construction or restoration zones.

Please do not collect any plants or plant material in the Natural Area.





(photo: B. Moscardini)

1. Orange Jessamine (*Murraya paniculata*)

Non-native shrub to small tree, growing up to 12' and almost as wide. Leaves are comprised of 3-9 semi-glossy pinnately arranged leaflets. Small white ½" flowers bloom intermittently throughout the year, reminiscent of strong citrus. Flowers give way to a small citrus like non-edible fruit, similar to a small red oblong kumquat.

Location:

At the Nature Center Entry way, expertly placed outside of the Nature Center restrooms. It's an older plant, so you may not find it on the ground where other plants are.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

2. White Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*)

Medium sized native deciduous tree commonly found within riparian zones throughout the San Gabriel Foothills. Excellent park shade tree which can grow up to 40' plus Gray bark has "eyes" as remnants of former branching on the trunk in a fairly evenly spaced pattern. Rounded glossy slightly serrated leaves provide broad shade for most of the year.

Location:

Located just across the walkway from the outdoor classroom.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

3. Coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*)

Medium to large shrub with semi-glossy leathery leaves. Red stems are dotted with green to deep red berries, similar in appearance to the coffee plant and bush. Excellent native foundation plant.

Location:

At phone pole along Woody's Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

4. Prickly Pear (*Oppuntia spp.*)

Paddle or Beavertail Cactus flowers in many colors from pink to yellow to white. Access to water will affect growth habit, whereas in a dry native soil will tend to be more compact. Fruit and paddles are edible after careful harvest and preparation due to the spine clusters.

Location:

Next to bench and Lake Aquatecos sign off of Woody's Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

5. White Sage (*Salvia apiana*)

White sage is a two to five foot evergreen perennial with lavender-tinged white flower spikes emerging in summer. White sage leaves start out crinkly grey/green and become smooth white. This sage is native to the southern coast ranges, reaching up from the desert floor to almost 6,000 feet. Likes dry slopes, full sun, and no extra water. It is not specific to one soil and like most sages, benefits from a good cut back.

Location:

At the base of a young California Sycamore, it's at the west end of Woody's Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

6. Shrub Oak (*Quercus* spp).

This smaller oak is likely a hybrid of the Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and a shrub oak. Its full dark leaves are cupped, spiny and have the signature "hairy notches" on the underside of the leaf veins.

Location:

Behind a Sycamore this lone oak is along the short "Ethno-botany Trail", off the western edge of "Woody's Trail". Native grape vines have grabbed a hold as well.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

7. Common Rush (*Juncus effusus*)

This riparian plant is normally found in wetter soils or may be completely submerged along water's edge, similar to cattails. The tall (3-5') cylindrical leaves are topped by loosely arranged seed heads.

Location:

Next to the previous oak, this Rush is on the opposite side of the same path. Best when ground is moist and the plant is vigorous; tall seed heads are a giveaway.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini) **DO NOT TOUCH!!!**

8. Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)

Poison-oak is a deciduous shrub that can become a vine if allowed to climb. Poison oak uses aerial roots to sucker and to latch onto trees or other shrubs. New spring foliage ranges from red to bright green; has great fall color. The oils in the plant tissues cause a painful rash. Washing the areas of skin that contacted it with a mild detergent and warm water can greatly reduce the problem. It is in the top five for use by wildlife, but is otherwise quite a nuisance plant for people. It is also very flammable.

Location:

As the above path off of Woody's trail meets the San Gabriel River Trail, you'll start to see there's quite a bit along the way, but this particular stand is pretty substantial. It has its own sign.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

9. Dodder (*Cuscuta californica*)

This parasitic vine has the appearance of bright yellow-orange straw, growing around and through a host plant. In this case the host is the poison oak above. It has tiny inconspicuous leaves and just as tiny white flowers. It emerges in the spring and will grow through summer. While it is a parasitic vine, it doesn't necessarily harm the host plant.

Location:
Woven within
Poison Oak above.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

10. Nevin's Barberry (*Mahonia nevinii*)

Nevin's Barberry is a blue-gray-green SPINY evergreen shrub 1 to 5 feet then can slowly become a slightly larger tree-shrub. Will become covered with yellow flower spikes, 2" long in Mar.-Apr., followed by hundreds of red berries great for birds. Native in the Los Angeles Basin, Redlands, and San Diego Counties, however is becoming extinct in many of its old locations. It is very drought tolerant and an excellent barrier plant.

Location:
Along Woody's trail as it turns back east and running along the San Gabriel River Trail. It is a stand approximately 6 feet tall and slightly wider. It is the only subject within eyeshot.

Letter ID:



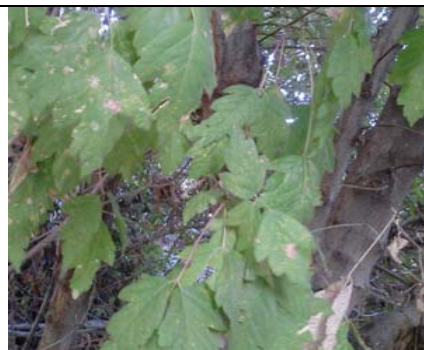
(photo: B. Moscardini)

11. Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*)

Southern California Black Walnut is an uncommon shrub or tree to 15-25 ft., grows along stream beds from Ventura south. This plant is important to wildlife as it provides food (small, edible walnuts) and nesting sites for many birds and mammals. The walnuts are one of the strongest allelopathic (producing a hormone that prohibits understory or adjacent growth) plants and are difficult to garden under.

Location:
This lone Walnut hangs over the southern loop of Woody's Trail as you make your way east, back toward the Nature Center parking lot.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

12. Box Elder (*Acer negundo* v. *californicum*)

California Box Elder is a deciduous tree, from 25'-40'. Native to the mountains of central and northern California. It's a tough shade tree with fair fall color, excellent stream side stabilizer. This tree provides a very fast windbreak, needs moisture at first, then very drought resistant. This tree will grow in a wide range of soils but it is always growing near a water source.

Location:
Opposite the bench and little pond on the southern loop of Woody's Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

13. California Bay Laurel (*Umbellularia californica*)

Large evergreen shrub to medium tree but can get very large in favorable conditions. The leaves are aromatic like its Greek cousin (*Laurus nobilis*). Native to the mountains of Calif. and into Oregon. Prefers partial shade and moderate water. Its leaves can also be used as seasoning. Small yellow umbels mature to green/black fruit. Nuts from fruit can also be consumed after roasting. Plant is not a good companion for Oaks as it is a vector for the pathogen that causes Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramora*).

Location:

Located next to and slightly behind the previous Box Elder.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

14. Black Cottonwood / Balsam Poplar

(*Populus balsamifera ssp. trichocarpa*)

Upright growth to 40', half as wide. Dark heart-shaped leaves with bright creamy white reverse. Usually found in wet zones. Deciduous. Cottony seed-head display (similar to that of willows) in spring.

Location:

At entrance/exit to Woody's Trail, opposite side of walkway of sage above.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

15. Purple Sage (*Salvia leucophylla*)

Silvery green foliage topped with medium silvery purple flower clusters. Excellent for native butterfly gardens. Mounding growth 4' tall and over 6' wide.

Location:

Between the entrance/exit to Woody's Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

16. Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum gracillimum*)

Brightly flowering yellow to orange to red tubular flowers give way to edible yellow-ripening-to-black currant (gooseberry). Dark to medium green leaves provide excellent backdrop for blooms. To 6' tall and wide. Good oak understory plant. Favorite of hummingbirds and butterflies.

Location:

Entrance to "Tim Bulmer Memorial Trail" also known as the San Gabriel River Trail from the main parking lot.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

17. California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*)

Foundation plant in the sage scrub/chaparral plant community. Fine silvery leaves and small creamy white flowers cover this mounding plant, up to 6' tall and wide. Strong odor when brushed upon. No water needed once established.

Location:
At entrance to Tim Bulmer Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

18. Mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*)

Southwest native growing typically near a water source or irrigated native environment. Can grow up to 8' tall and at least as wide. Small whitish pinkish flowers in spring. Plant is easily propagated and primarily used for riparian habitat restorations.

Location:
At entrance to Tim Bulmer Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

19. Mexican Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*)

Drought-deciduous large shrub to small tree to 20'. Can take many soil types and watering schemes. Large flat flower clusters (corymbs) give way to light blue to black berry clusters. Berries are slightly toxic when unripe, but are edible when fully ripe or cooked (jellies, wine; flowers used for infusions). Fast growth when young; needs protection from frost.

Location:
Next to kiosk where Bulmer Trail meets the Old River Road Trail and connector to San Gabriel River Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

20. Bladderpod (*Cleome isomeris*)

Compact perennial 3-6' tall and wide. Light gray-green foliage with bright yellow flowers at tips. Flowers give way to 1 to 2" green pods, ripening brown. Native from high desert to sandy foothills.

Location:
Along entrance gate to San Gabriel River Bike Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

21. Matilija Poppy (*Romneya coulteri*)

Deciduous shrub to 6' tall. Rangy but vertical growth of slender woody stems are topped with a bright white and yellow flower resembling a sunny-side-up egg. Pointed gray-green foliage make this an excellent hillside barrier plant.

Location:

Along entrance gate to San Gabriel River Bike Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

22. Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

"Hollywood" namesake, for its holly-like berries and native growth on those famous hills. Large shrub to small tree, with an open growth habit of dark green serrated leaves, displaying red barriers spring through winter. High habitat value, similar to Elderberry above.

Location:

On north east bend of the Woodland Chaparral Trail, opposite the wooden bench.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

23. Lemonade Berry (*Rhus integrifolia*)

This sumac is a rambling shrub to 6' tall has dense leathery foliage comprised of rounded but toothed waxy leaves dotted with small pinkish-red somewhat fragrant flower clusters. Important foundation plant in chaparral and sage scrub plant communities.

Location:

Next to the Toyon above, opposite of the wooden bench on the Woodland Chaparral Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

24. Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*)

Medium to dark green leaves covered in light bluish-purple flower spikes in spring early summer. Flowers are composed of vertically segmented clusters (whorls). Extremely fragrant when brushed on, plant can span 6-15' across and from 3-6' high.

Location:

Next to Joe's Bridge (Robert Joe), which connects the Woodland Chaparral Trail with the Meadow/Raptor Foraging Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

25. Cholla (*Cylindropuntia* spp)

Desert scene staple. Mounding growth to 2-3' tall and 15' wide +. Covered in 1/2" to 1" spines. Small 1 1/2" yellow-green bloom in summer

Location:

Within the fork where the Woodland/Chaparral Trail meets the Meadow/Raptor Foraging Trail.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

26. Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)

Creamy pinkish flowers cloak the 2' tall mounds of evergreen needle-like foliage. Native to most of the Western US and Mexico, this groundcover is highly variable in not only leaf structure but also flower color and growth habit. It's a staple in the Sage Scrub Plant Community.

Location:

Within the fork in the road where the Woodland/Chaparral Trail meets the Meadow/Raptor Foraging Trail, sitting next to the Cholla above.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

27. California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)

Native sycamore found primarily near water sources but can also be found in drier environs where it can root down deep into ground water sources. Largest native deciduous tree with deeply-lobed three to five fingered leaves that can measure up to 12". Whitish mottled bark with and irregular upright to slanted trunk habit. Seed pods hang in long segmented strands.

Location:

In trail fork, near cholla and buckwheat above.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

28. Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)

Semi-upright deciduous tree with 5-6" pink or white flowers in May-June, after leaf-out. Eastern US native can take some drought-like conditions. Compound, pinnately arranged leaves from 12-24" in length. Related to Gleditsia (Honey Locust).

Location:

At the fork in the road where the Meadow/Raptor Foraging Trail meets the Old River Road Trail, the end closest to the main parking lot not the river end.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

29. Catalina Cherry (*Prunus illicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*)

Cherry native to the Channel Islands. Green cherry ripens to dark red almost black. Fruit is all skin and pit with little flesh; best for wildlife so it's a valuable Chaparral foundation plant. Medium semi-glossy leaves are much less toothed than the common Holly leaf Cherry.

Location:
Along walkway,
within parking lot
island.

Letter ID:



(photo: B. Moscardini)

30. Wildrose (*Rosa californica*)

Native rose which grows in upright brambles once established; heavy amount of small thorns. Pale pink 1-2" flowers yield to bright orange-red fruit, or hips, from spring through fall. Edible hips are also a valuable food source for wildlife. Little to no water once established.

Location:
Along other
walkway within
parking lot island.

Letter ID:
